

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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-----057526 100827Z /23

R 091512Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6950

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L OUAGADOUGOU 2018

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, UV

SUBJ: CAMPAIGN FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

REF: OUAGADOUGOU 1943

1. WITH ONLY FIVE DAYS LEFT BEFORE THE FIRST BALLOT FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN IS IN FULL SWING AND THE FOUR CANDIDATES ARE TRAVELLING THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, MAKING POLITICAL SPEECHES IN KEY CITIES, AND TAKING EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW THEMSELVES TO THE VOTERS. EACH CANDIDATE HAS BEEN ALLOCATED TWO PERIODS OF 30 MINUTES EACH ON THE LOCAL RADION AND THEIR REMARKS, WHICH ARE DELIVERED IN FRENCH, ARE LATER TRANSLATED INTO SEVERAL LOCAL LANGUAGES.

2. IN HIS FIRST RADIO APPEARANCE, PRESIDENT LAMIZANA STRESSED THE NEED FOR STABILITY AND CONTINUITY, POINTED
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TO HIS REGIME'S SUCCESS IN REORGANIZING UPPER VOLTA'S FINANCES AND TO ITS EXCELLENT RECORD IN MAINTAINING RESPONSE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND BASIC FREEDOMS, AND CLAIMED THAT, DESPITE SERIOUS SETBACKS BEYOND HIS CONTROL, SUCH AS THE RECENT DROUGHT, A REAL START HAS BEEN MADE UNDER HIS REGIME FOR THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF UPPER VOLTA. HIS OPPONENTS, OF COURSE, HAVE STRESSED

THE NEED FOR CHANGE AND HAVE CLAIMED THAT DURING THE 12 YEARS OF THE LAMIZANA REGIME, UPPER VOLTA HAS REMAINED ECONOMICALLY, SOCIALLY, POLITICALLY AND CULTURALLY STAGNANT. THEY HAVE CALLED FOR MORE DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP AND HAVE STRESSED THAT POINT, THAT, IF THERE IS TO BE A TRULY CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT, ALL MILITARY OFFICERS, INCLUDING "GENERAL" LAMIZANA, MUST RETURN TO THE BARRACKS.

3. SO FAR, PRESIDENT LAMIZANA HAS MADE NO REFERENCE TO THE LETTERS ADDRESSED TO GENERAL BABA SY BY HIS THREE OPPONENTS IN WHICH THEY QUESTIONED THE LEGALITY OF HIS CANDIDACY (OUAGA 166). THERE HAS BEEN NO INDICATION THAT GENERAL BABA SY HAS REPLIED TO THSE LETTERS AND MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT THEY WILL REMAIN UNANSWERED. THE THREE CIVILIAN CANDIDATES HAVE COMPLAINED THAT LIMIZANA IS CONDUCTING HIS CAMPAIGN WITH ALL THE RESOURCES OF THE STATE AT HIS DISPOSAL, THAT HE TRAVELS BY ROAD OR BY AIR AT THE EXPENSE OF THE STATE, AND THAT HE IS GIVEN VIP TREATMENT WHEREVER HE GOES BY THE PREFEECT AND SUBPREFECTS. THERE ARE RUMORS ALSO THAT TRADITIONAL CHIEFS HAVE BEEN "BOUGHT" BY LAMIZANA WITH FUNDS GIVEN TO HIM BY LIBYAN LEADER QADHAFI WHO SUPPORTS HIS CANDIDACY SIMPLY BECAUSE HE IS THE ONLY MOSLEM CANDIATE.

4. WHATEVER THRUTH THERE MAY BE IN THESE ALLEGATIONS, CONFIDENTIAL

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MOST OBSERVERS ARE OF THE OPINION THAT THE ELECTROAL CAMPAIGN IS BEING CARRED OUT IN A MANNER AS FAIR AS CAN BE EXPECTED IN A COUNTRY SUCH AS UPPER VOLTA. IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT PRESIDENT LAMIZANA WILL BE ELECTED ON THE FIRST BALLOT WITH AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OVER THE OTHER THREE CANDIDATES, ALTHOUGH HE MAY WELL WIN ONLY BY A NARROW MARGING. GRAHAM

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